

to these extreme measures—unconstitutional in my view—that Arizona has taken.

Let me just point out a few things. The law says that police officers can stop and detain people who are suspected of being illegal aliens and demand that they provide proof that they are U.S. citizens. The fact of the matter is that this—some people have said, Well, you know, KEITH, this could make people who may have a brown complexion and dark hair, who sort of have a typical Mexican appearance, that might subject them to unfair and illegal stops. My response is, That's true. It may stop Latinos, but it will stop anybody, because there's no certain way that a Latino person looks. There is a wide diversity all throughout the community, a wide diversity, no color, no language, no culture. People look all kinds of ways. The most Anglo-looking person in Arizona could be stopped and demanded to show their proof of citizenship, and if they don't have it, they could be carted off.

The fact is that I am making this argument because I don't want Americans of any background to think that they are going to be somehow safe from a law as sweeping and unfair as this one. No one is safe when the Constitution is offended in such a dramatic way as it has been by this Arizona law. But at the same time I have no sympathy for this Arizona law, I will say that it is a symptom of the Congress' failure to deal with comprehensive immigration reform.

I want to say that the argument has been made that somehow this is about addressing issues of crime and law enforcement. You know, if that were true, why would the Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police oppose a law for fiscal and public safety reasons, noting that the fear of government officials would diminish the public's willingness to cooperate with the police in criminal investigations, and it will negatively affect the ability of law enforcement agencies across the State to fulfill their many responsibilities in a timely manner?

The fact is that law enforcement officials who know something about law enforcement don't like this law. They are right. And the fact is this law is offensive to our Constitution. But again, it calls into question what we are doing here in Congress on comprehensive immigration reform, which is nothing much. The fact is we need to get busy on immigration reform. The American people want it. It is popular. It is something that the American people have asked for, and the Congress should step forward and do something about it right away.

So let me yield back to the gentleman from the great State of Colorado and just point out that comprehensive immigration reform is something that I believe we need.

There are just a few principles that I want to mention before I yield back, and that is that the progressive immi-

gration reform agenda passed by the Progressive Caucus believes in keeping families together, creating a path towards citizenship and employment verification. Because as much as we talk about securing the border—and we should secure the border—you can't always secure the border at the border. We need the cooperation of all employers to make sure that they are doing employment verification so that we can make sure that the border is being secured. So yes, at the border, but also at the point of employment which people are drawn to.

There is more to be said about this, but I yield back to the gentleman.

□ 1930

Mr. POLIS. I appreciate Mr. ELLISON bringing up employer verification. One of the key components of the Senate outline requires biometric employment verification. So this is not a Social Security number that could be used by somebody who is 6 foot 1 and 52 one day and someone who is 5 foot 3 and 42 the next day. This is a real biometric ID. No later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this proposal, the Social Security Administration will issue biometric Social Security cards that will be fraud resistant, tamper resistant, wear resistant, be machine readable, contain a photograph and an electronically coded microchip processor which possesses a unique biometric identifier for the authorized card bearer. It could be a fingerprint, eye scan.

We are going to be serious about knowing who can work and who is not legally employable. We need to be serious about making sure that it is the right person that we are talking about.

Again, there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions of violations of this area of employment law every day in this country, and we are not even remotely serious about cracking down on those. That is why we urgently need, why Arizona and the rest of the country has called on Congress to address this issue and why we only ignore them at our own peril.

We are joined by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) who, in her time here, has already become a champion of comprehensive immigration reform and making sure that we can fix our broken immigration system. I am glad to welcome Congresswoman CHU from California.

Ms. CHU. Today I stand here to say our immigration system is broken and fixing it is critically important to the long term security and prosperity of our Nation. Of course, I have a much different opinion on how to fix it than some on the other side of the aisle. Where they see an attack on American culture and way of life, I see a chance to strengthen our Nation with a new generation of productive and active citizens. Where they see fear and paranoia, I see an opportunity to do the right thing, the humane thing, and bring 12 million immigrants out of the shadows and into society.

What they don't see is the ongoing family separations, the exploitation of workers by unscrupulous workers, and the true human cost of our broken immigration system.

I get calls every day in my district from families who have sacrificed and worked hard to put food on the table and send their children to school. Take the case of Maria, an American citizen, who came into our district office last month with her two children, ages 2 and 4, crying torrents of tears. They were trying to do the right thing. Her husband was undocumented. She had gone to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, with her husband for an appointment with an immigration official where she was petitioning for her husband to receive legal status. The immigration officer denied it saying there was insufficient hardship.

It is now more than a year since her husband was left stranded in Ciudad Juarez. Even married to an American citizen, he is barred from reentering the country for up to 10 years because of a law passed by Congress in the 1990s making it tougher for undocumented immigrants to acquire legal status through marriage. In the meantime, Maria has lost her house, was forced to do a short sale because she could not keep up with the mortgage payments without her husband's income. Her children wake up in the middle of the night crying for their daddy. To me that sounds like sufficient hardship.

These family separations are cruel and counterproductive to both legal immigrants and citizens. It is families that have historically helped immigrants assimilate into American life and helped prevent health and social problems. Family networks give individuals the support and resources they need to become successful, productive members of our society.

And if Congress doesn't act to fix our immigration system, States will do their own thing and we will be stuck with an unfair and impractical patchwork system. Just last week, the State of Arizona passed the broadest and strictest immigration measure in generations in any State. The law makes a failure to carry immigration documents a crime, and gives the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally.

Now I don't walk around with my birth certificate or passport, which is expensive and out of financial reach of many. And neither does Abdon, a commercial truck driver living in Arizona. Last week on the heels of the Governor signing this new law, he was shackled by the police and detained by the Phoenix Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office. Abdon was born a citizen of the United States. He has a job. He pays taxes. He speaks English. His wife Jackie is a natural-born citizen of the United States. She too has a job and she also speaks English. She pays taxes. But he was pulled over and arrested. Why? Not because he was speeding, that's for sure.